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(54) **SINGLE MODE GRATING COUPLER WITH VERTICAL COUPLING DIRECTION AND SMALL BACK REFLECTION**

(71) Applicant: **Nokia Solutions and Networks Oy**, Espoo (FI)

(72) Inventors: **Argishti Melikyan**, Murray Hill, NJ (US); **Young-Kai Chen**, Murray Hill, NJ (US); **Po Dong**, Murray Hill, NJ (US)

(73) Assignee: **Nokia Solutions and Networks Oy**, Espoo (FI)

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**G02B 6/124** (2006.01)  
**G02B 6/42** (2006.01)  
**G02B 6/30** (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

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(58) **Field of Classification Search**

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USPC ..... 385/14  
See application file for complete search history.

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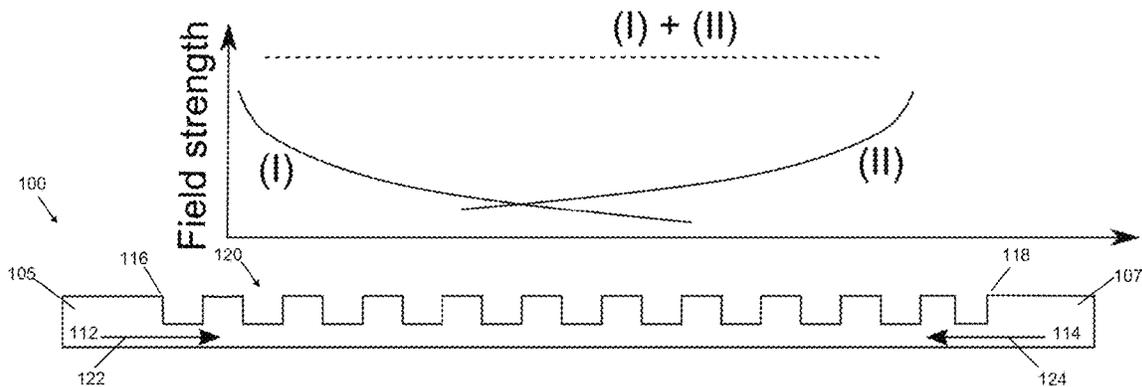
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Primary Examiner — Jerry M Blevins

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An optical apparatus comprising an optical device having an optical input-output face, at least two planar waveguide arms being located on a substrate, an optical splitter being located on the substrate, and, an optical grating coupler being located on the substrate. The optical splitter has an optical input and a plurality of optical outputs, each optical output being optically connected to a corresponding one of the planar waveguide arms. The optical grating coupler is connected to receive light from each planar waveguide arm and form diffraction pattern therefrom such that a principal maximum of one of the diffraction patterns overlaps with a principal maximum of another of the diffraction patterns on the optical input-output face of the optical device, the principal maxima of the one and another of the diffraction patterns being directed in different directions.

**14 Claims, 16 Drawing Sheets**



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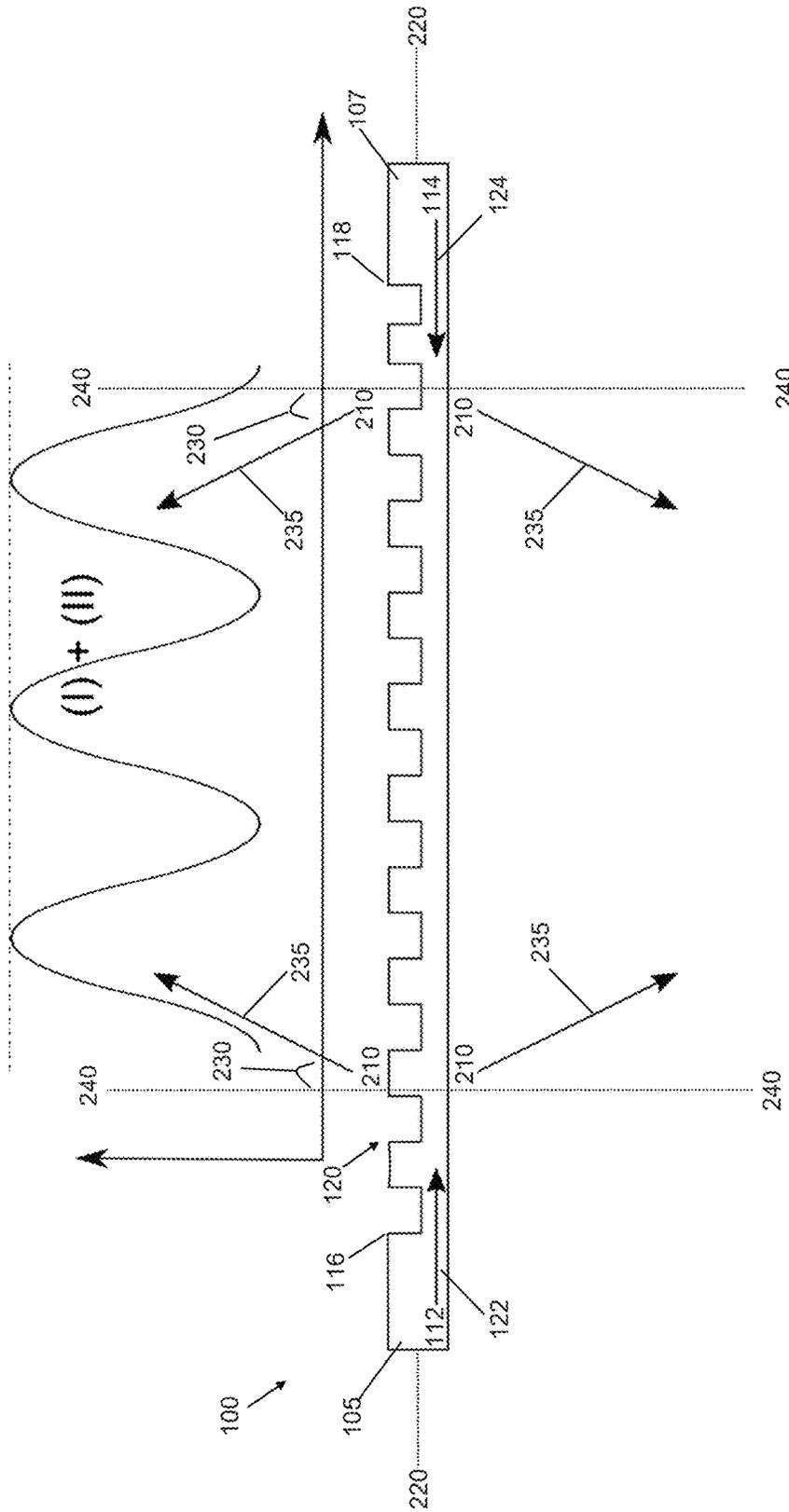


FIG. 2



100 ↗

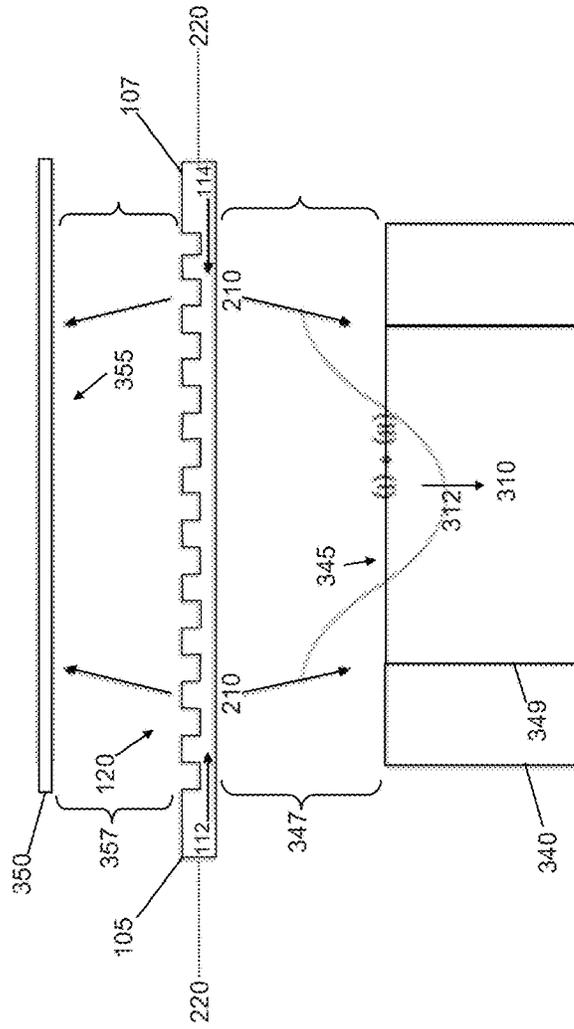


FIG. 3B



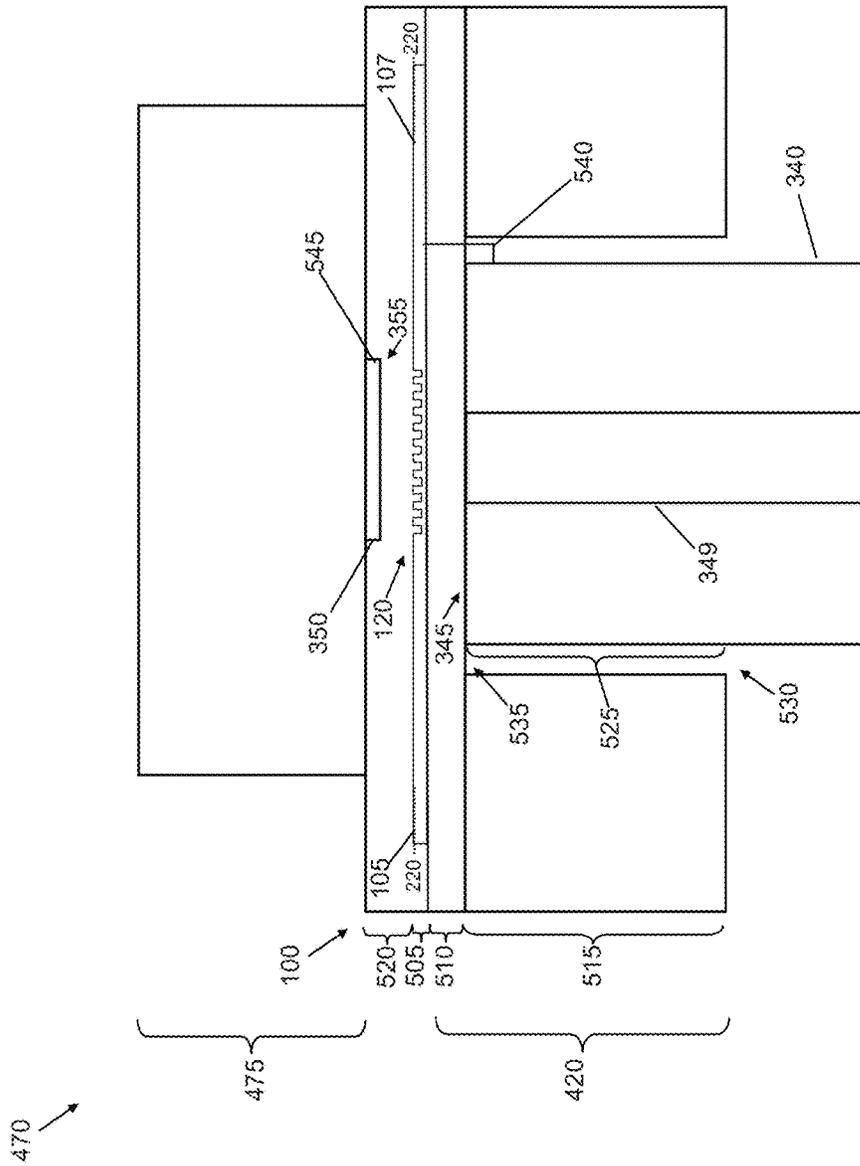


FIG. 5A

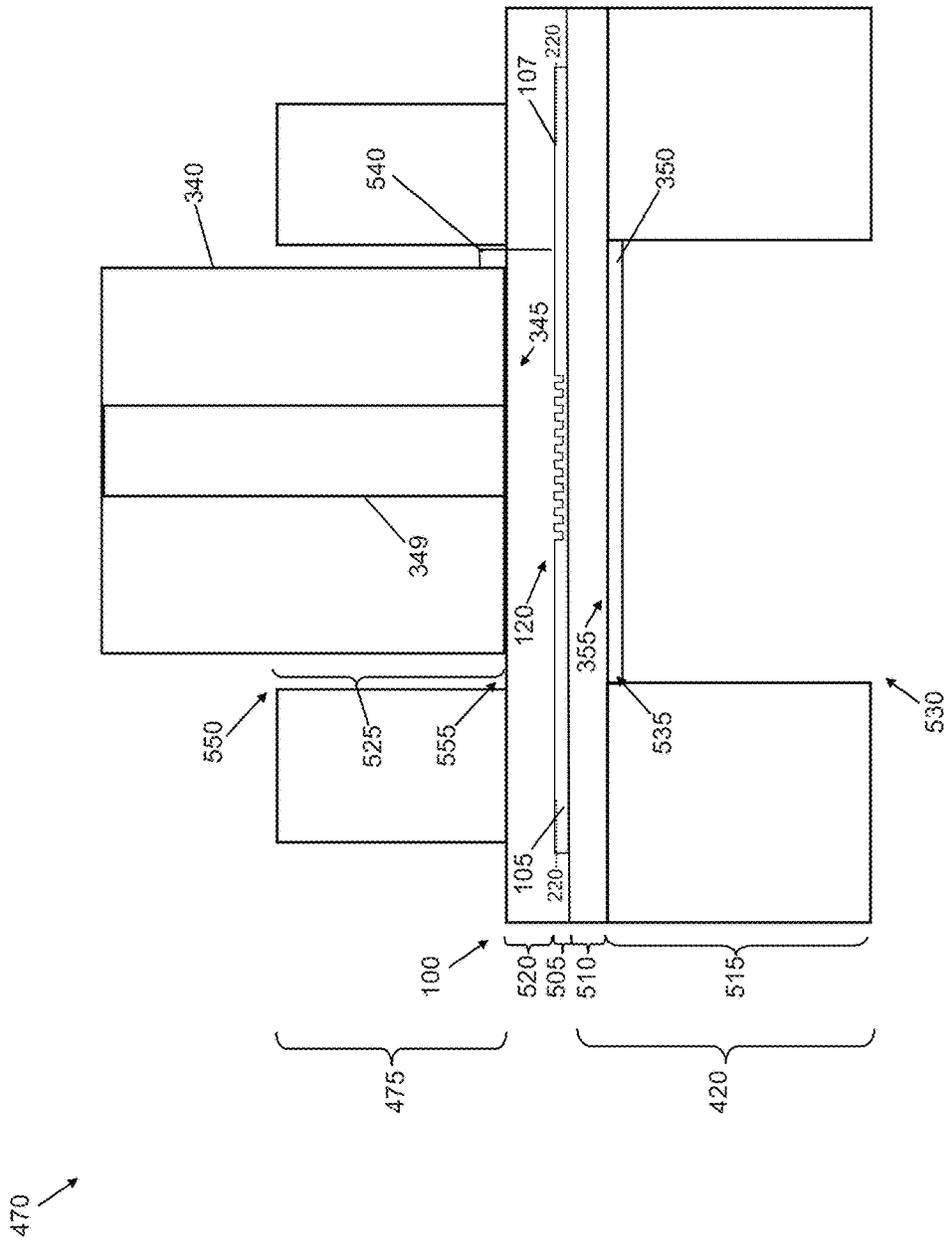


FIG. 5B

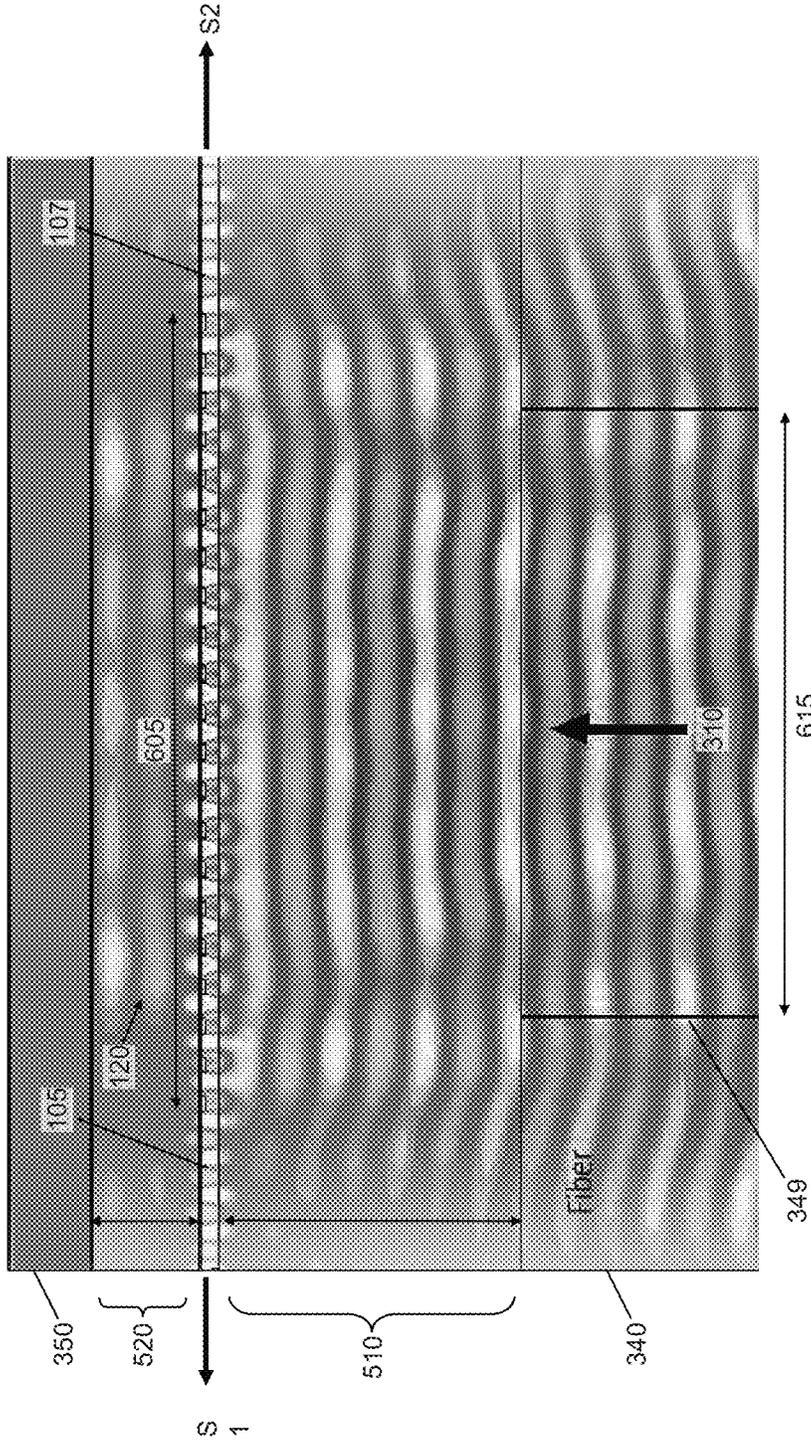


FIG. 6

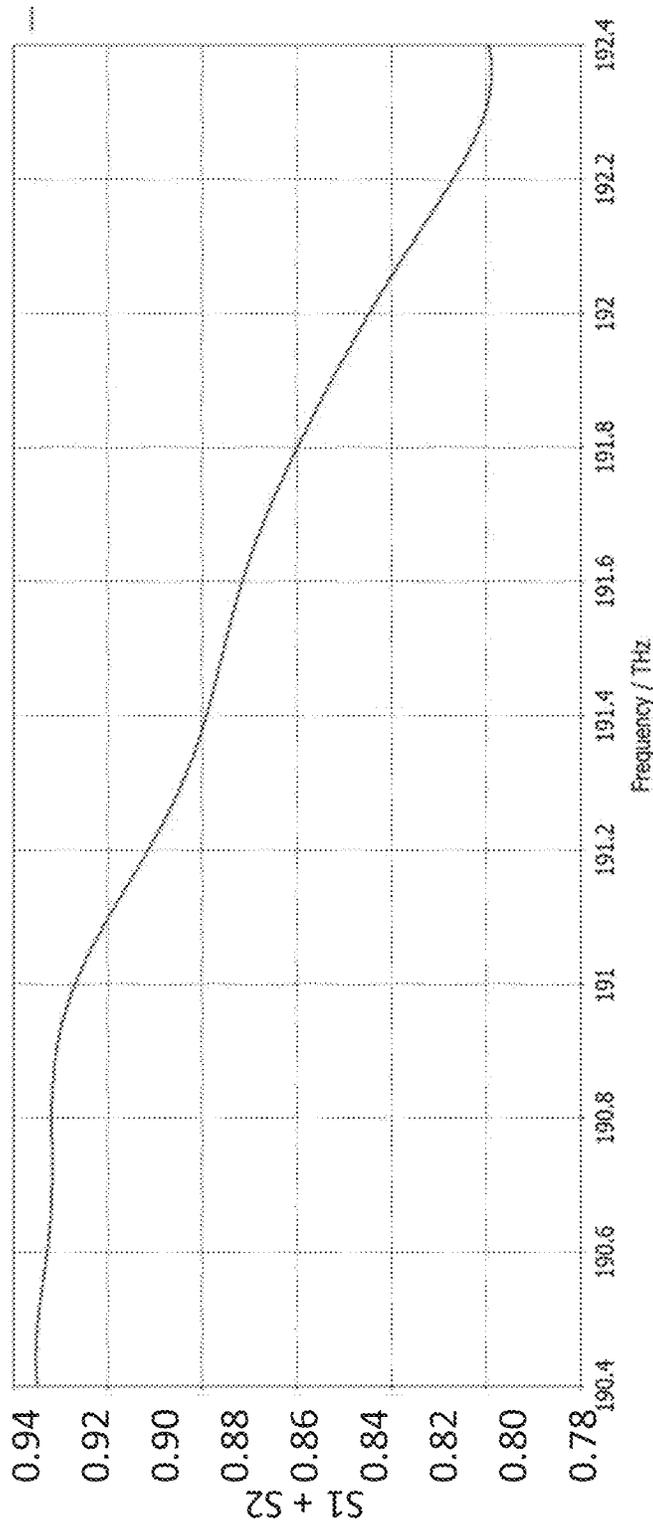


FIG. 7

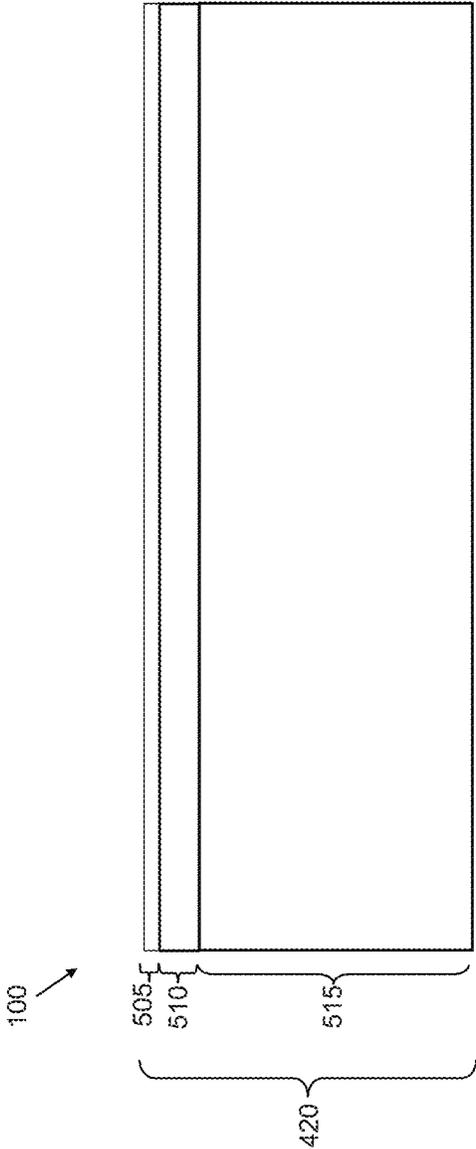


FIG. 8

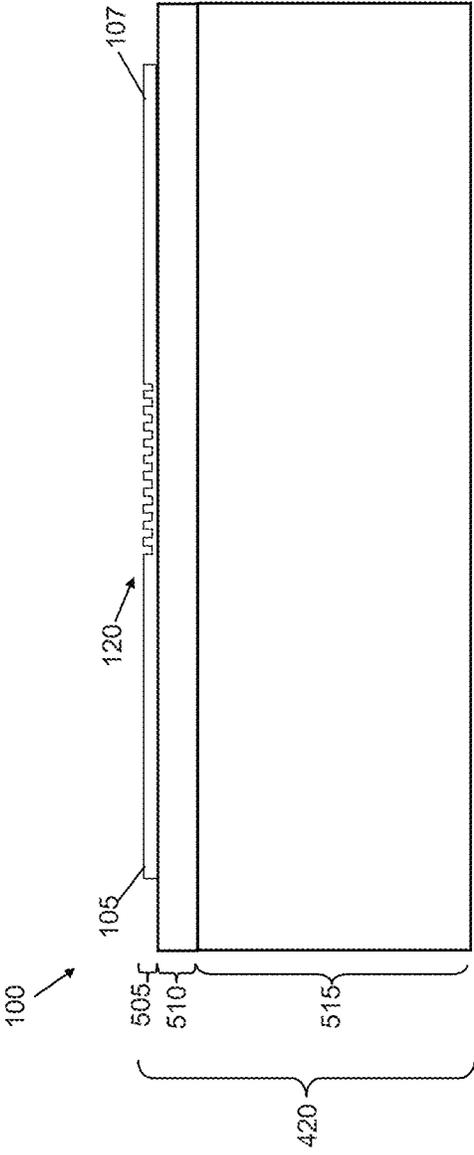


FIG. 9

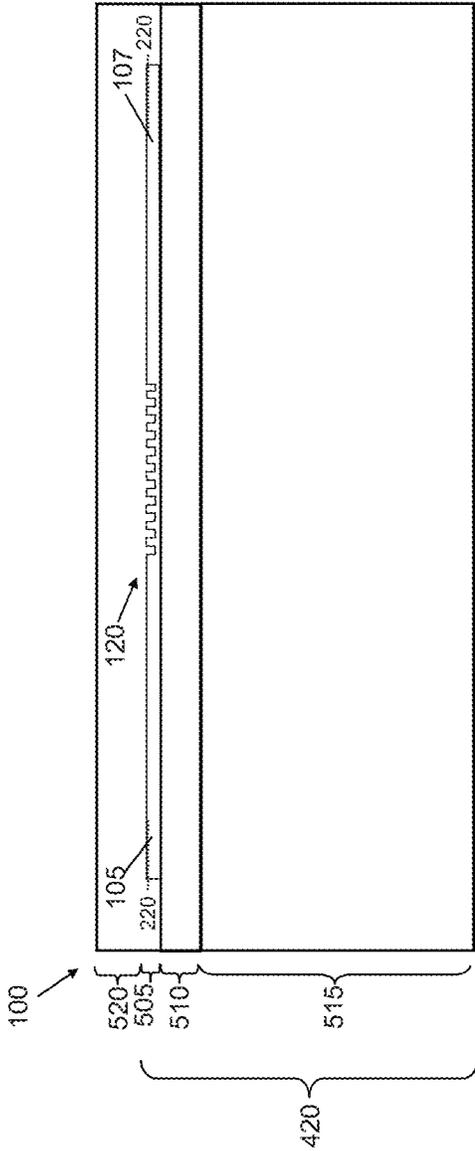


FIG. 10

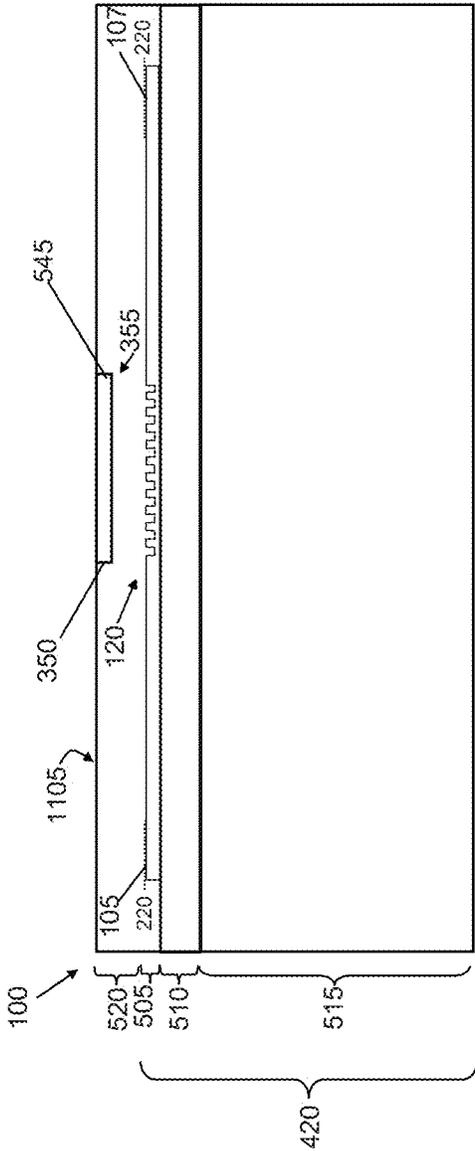


FIG. 11

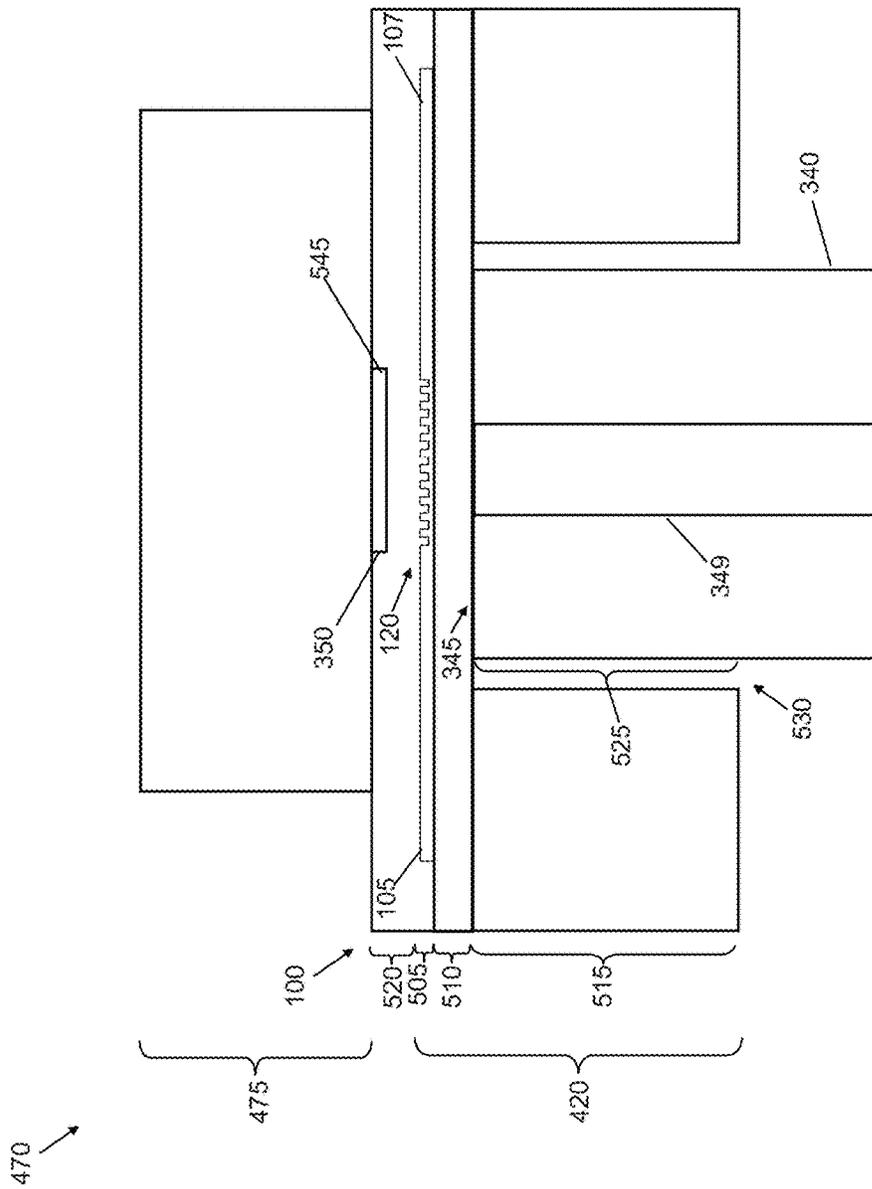


FIG. 12

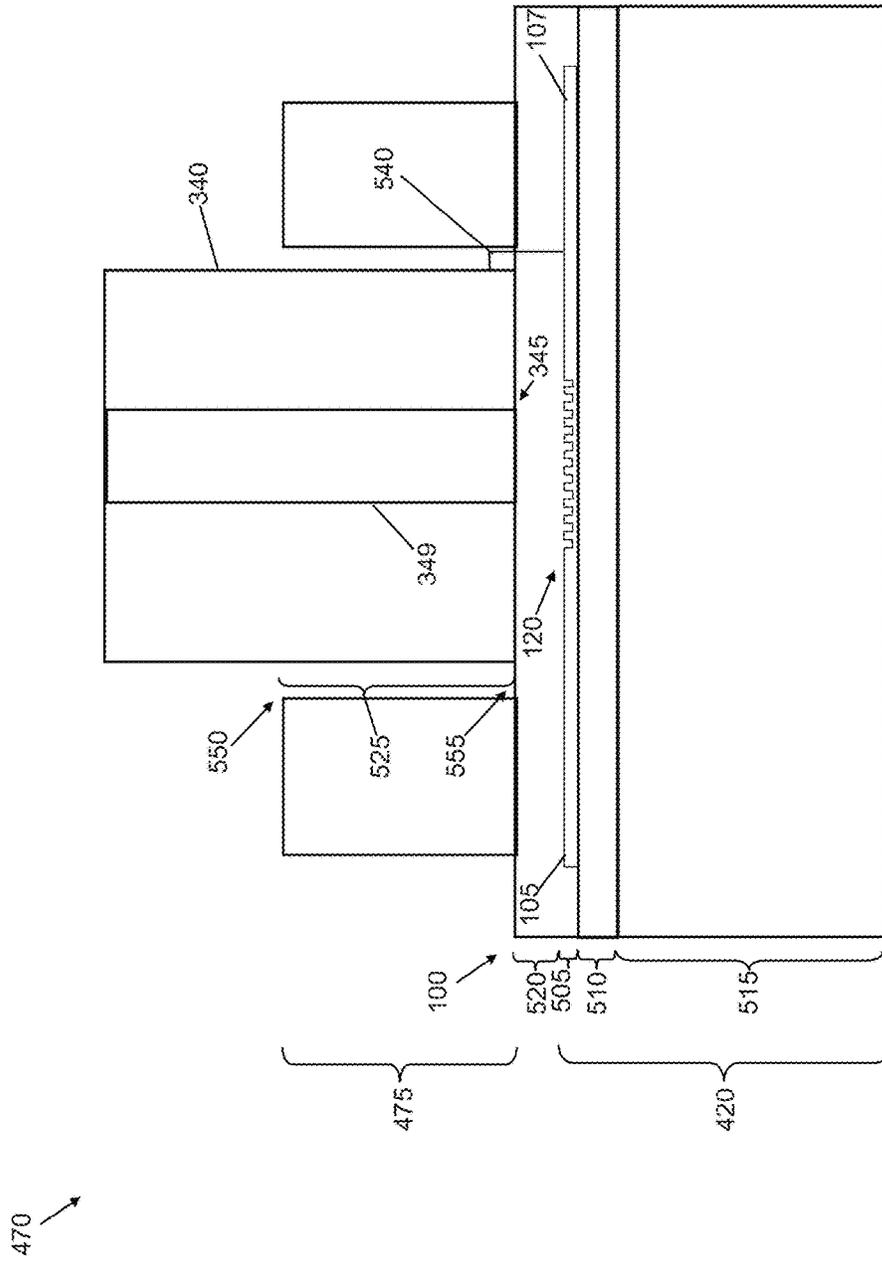


FIG. 13



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# SINGLE MODE GRATING COUPLER WITH VERTICAL COUPLING DIRECTION AND SMALL BACK REFLECTION

## TECHNICAL FIELD

The invention relates, in general, to an optical apparatus having optical couplers and, more specifically, to vertical optical couplers in a photonic integrated circuit apparatus, and methods of manufacturing such apparatuses.

## BACKGROUND

This section introduces aspects that may help facilitate a better understanding of the inventions. Accordingly, the statements of this section are to be read in this light and are not to be understood as admissions about what is prior art or what is not prior art.

Vertical optical grating couplers are often used to diffract light largely vertically from a silicon photonic chip to free space so that the light may be collected at an end of a single mode optical fiber located above the grating coupler. Typically, to avoid back reflection into the waveguide, the fiber is tilted to have an off-normal angle, and the grating coupler is designed to have a correspondingly aligned off-normal radiation angle. The use of such off-normal tilt angles, however, presents difficulties with device packaging and requires two angular alignments. Efforts to improve the match between the off-normal radiated field and mode of the tilted single mode fiber by apodizing the grating elements can present fabrication challenges related to reproducibly matching the Gaussian mode of a single mode optical fiber. The optical coupling efficiency can be improved by placing a mirror above or below the grating coupler to reflect light into the fiber, but, there are challenges to construct a mirror that reflects light with an off-normal radiation angle to enable efficient coupling to the end of such a tilted single mode optical fiber.

## SUMMARY

One embodiment is an optical apparatus comprising an optical device having an optical input-output face, at least two planar waveguide arms being located on a substrate, an optical splitter being located on the substrate and an optical grating coupler being located on the substrate. The optical splitter has an optical input and a plurality of optical outputs, each optical output being optically connected to a corresponding one of the planar waveguide arms. The optical grating coupler is connected to receive light from each planar waveguide arm and form diffraction pattern therefrom such that a principal maximum of one of the diffraction patterns overlaps with a principal maximum of another of the diffraction patterns on the optical input-output face of the optical device, the principal maxima of the one and another of the diffraction patterns being directed in different directions.

In some such embodiments, a first of the planar waveguide arms can be configured to propagate light along the optical grating coupler in an opposite direction than a second of the planar waveguide arms. In some such embodiments, the overlapping principal maxima can be first order principal maxima of the one and another of the diffraction patterns. In some embodiments, only one principal maximum of the one and another of the diffraction patterns can be incident on the optical input-output face of the optical device. In some such embodiments, the overlapping principal maxima can have a

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peak at or near a center of the optical input-output face. In some such embodiments, the diffraction patterns can combine to form an intensity pattern with one peak on the optical input-output face of the optical device. In some such embodiments, the diffraction patterns can combine to form an intensity pattern with a single substantially Gaussian shaped field strength distribution centered above and below the optical grating coupler. In some such embodiments, the optical device can be an optical fiber and the optical input-output face can be an end of the fiber. In some such embodiments, the diffraction patterns can combine to form an intensity pattern with a shape and numerical aperture that maximizes optical coupling efficiency to a single mode size of the optical device. In some such embodiments, the optical device can have a single mode size diameter in a range from 3 to 15 microns and the optical grating coupler, composed of silicon and surrounded by a silicon oxide cladding, includes a set of equally spaced ridges across one dimension of the substrate, wherein the ridges has a periodicity in a range from 0.4 to 2.0 microns and a spacing in a range from 0.1 to 1.9 microns.

Any such embodiments can further include an optical phase shifter optically coupled to one of the waveguide arms, the optical phase shifter configured to adjust a phase of the portion of the optical output directed through the one waveguide arm. Any such embodiments can further include an optical phase shifter optically coupled to one of the waveguide arms, the optical phase shifter configured to adjust the phase of the portion of the optical output directed through the one waveguide arm such that the optical output portions directed to the optical grating coupler combine to produce the diffraction patterns with an intensity pattern with a single substantially Gaussian shaped field strength distribution having a peak intensity in a plane parallel to but perpendicularly off-set from a major plane of the optical grating coupler. Any such embodiments can further include a phase control module located on the optical system package substrate and coupled via electrodes on the substrate to an optical phase shifter located on the substrate and optically coupled to one of the waveguide arms. For any such embodiments, the substrate can be a photonic integrated circuit substrate mounted to an optical system package support substrate.

Another embodiment is another optical apparatus comprising an optical grating coupler located on a substrate and two or more waveguide arms on the substrate. The optical grating coupler can be configured to produce a vertical propagation optical signal in a region above and below a major plane of the optical grating coupler. The waveguide arms can each be configured to couple equal portions of a split optical signal with the optical grating coupler. Each of the portions of the split optical signal when directed to the optical grating coupler can produce vertical propagation optical signals with an acute off-normal radiation angle.

In some such embodiments, the optical signal portions directed to the optical grating coupler can combine to produce the vertical propagation optical signal with a single substantially Gaussian shaped field strength distribution centered above and below the optical grating coupler. In some such embodiments the optical grating coupler can be a one-dimensional grating coupler while in other such embodiments, the optical grating coupler can be a two-dimensional grating coupler. In some such embodiments, the two or more waveguide arms can be coupled to a single waveguide on the substrate, the single waveguide configured to carry the split optical signal. In some such embodiments, ends of the two or more waveguide arms can be tapered from

a width equal to a width of the optical grating coupler to a width equal to a width of non-tapered portions of the waveguide arms.

Any such embodiments can further include a mirror having a reflective surface facing and parallel to the major plane of the optical grating coupler. Any such embodiments can further include an optical device having an optical input-output face located in a region centered over or under the optical grating coupler. The optical device can be configured to receive the vertical propagation optical signal from the optical grating coupler, or, to transmit a single mode optical signal to the region above and below the major plane. In some such embodiments, the optical grating coupler can be configured to produce the vertical propagation optical signal with a shape and numerical aperture that maximizes optical coupling efficiency to a single mode size of an optical device. In some such embodiments the optical device can have a single mode size diameter in a range from 3 to 15 microns and the optical grating coupler, composed of silicon and surrounded by a silicon oxide cladding, can include a set of equally spaced ridges across one dimension of the substrate, wherein the ridges has a periodicity in a range from 0.4 to 2.0 microns and a spacing in a range from 0.1 to 1.9 microns.

Any such embodiments can further include an optical phase shifter optically coupled to one of the waveguide arms. The optical phase shifter can be configured to adjust a phase of the portion of the split optical signal directed through the one waveguide arm. The optical phase shifter can be configured to adjust the phase of the portion of the split optical signal such that the optical signal portions directed to the optical grating coupler combine to produce the vertical propagation optical signal with a single substantially Gaussian shaped field strength distribution having a peak intensity in a plane parallel to but perpendicularly off-set from the major plane.

In any such embodiments, the substrate can a photonic integrated circuit substrate mounted to an optical system package support substrate.

Another embodiment is a method fabricating a vertical optical coupling apparatus, including providing a substrate, providing an optical layer on the substrate and patterning the optical layer. The optical layer is patterned to form an optical grating coupler and at least two waveguide arms optically coupled to the optical grating coupler. The waveguide arms are each configured to connect a split optical output to the optical grating coupler. The optical grating coupler is connected receive light from each of the waveguide arms and form diffraction pattern therefrom such that a principal maximum of one of the diffraction patterns overlaps with a principal maximum of another of the diffraction patterns on the optical input-output face of the optical device, the principal maxima of the one and another of the diffraction patterns being directed in different directions.

Another embodiment is another method comprising fabricating a vertical optical coupling apparatus. Fabricating the apparatus can include providing a substrate, providing an optical layer on the substrate and patterning the optical layer to form an optical grating coupler and two or more waveguide arms optically coupled to the optical grating coupler. The optical grating coupler can be configured to produce a vertical propagation optical signal in a region above and below a major plane of the optical grating coupler. The two or more waveguide arms can each be configured to couple equal portions of a split optical signal with the optical grating coupler. Each of the portions of the split optical signal when directed to the optical grating coupler can

produce vertical propagation optical signals with an acute off-normal radiation angle relative to the major plane of the optical grating coupler.

In some such embodiments, the substrate can include a handle layer and a first cladding layer on the handle layer with the optical layer located on the first cladding layer and fabricating the apparatus can further include depositing a second cladding layer on the optical grating coupler and the two or more waveguide arms.

Any such embodiments can further include depositing a reflective material on an outer surface of the second cladding layer, or, in an opening of the second cladding layer to form a mirror having a planar reflective surface facing, and parallel to, the major plane of the optical grating coupler.

Any such embodiments can further include forming an opening in the substrate and positioning an optical input-output of an optical device in the opening of the substrate. The optical input-output can be located in a region centered under the optical grating coupler. The optical device can be configured to receive the vertical propagation optical signal from the optical grating coupler, or, to transmit a single mode optical signal to the region above and below the major plane.

Any such embodiments can further include mounting an optical system package support substrate to the substrate and forming a opening in the optical system package support substrate and positioning an optical input-output of an optical device in the opening of the optical system package support substrate. The optical input-output can be located in a region centered over the optical grating coupler, and, the optical device can be configured to receive the vertical propagation optical signal from the optical grating coupler, or, transmit a single mode optical signal to the region.

Any such embodiments can further include forming an opening in the substrate and depositing a reflective material in the opening of the substrate to form a mirror having a planar reflective surface facing and parallel to the major plane of the optical grating coupler.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The embodiments of the disclosure are best understood from the following detailed description, when read with the accompanying FIGURES. Some features in the figures may be described as, for example, “top,” “bottom,” “vertical” or “lateral” for convenience in referring to those features. Such descriptions do not limit the orientation of such features with respect to the natural horizon or gravity. Various features may not be drawn to scale and may be arbitrarily increased or reduced in size for clarity of discussion. Reference is now made to the following descriptions taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 illustrates radiated field distribution curves (I and II) for an example optical apparatus of the disclosure in which two waveguides couple optical signal to both sides of an optical grating so that the combined optical signal vertically projected by the optical grating has a close to uniform field distribution curve (I+II);

FIG. 2 illustrates a radiated field distribution curve for the example optical apparatus shown in FIG. 1 where the vertically projected optical signals have a cosine-shaped field distribution curve (I+II);

FIG. 3A illustrates a radiated field distribution curve for the example optical apparatus shown in FIG. 1 where the off-normal radiation angles are adjusted such that where the vertically projected optical signals have a single substantially Gaussian shaped field distribution (I+II);

FIG. 3B presents a cross-sectional view of another optical apparatus embodiment of the disclosure similar to the optical apparatus depicted in FIGS. 1-3A;

FIG. 4 presents an overhead a plan view of another example apparatus embodiment of the disclosure, similar to the apparatus depicted in FIG. 3B;

FIG. 5A presents a cross-sectional view of another optical apparatus embodiment of the disclosure, similar to the apparatus depicted in FIG. 3B;

FIG. 5B presents a cross-sectional view of another optical apparatus embodiment of the disclosure, similar to the apparatus depicted in FIG. 3A;

FIG. 6 presents field distribution contours for a simulation of an apparatus similar to the apparatus shown in FIG. 3B or 5A;

FIG. 7 presents optical coupling efficiency as a function of optical frequency for the simulation shown in FIG. 6;

FIG. 8 presents a cross-sectional view of the partially completed optical apparatus at one stage of fabrication in accordance with one embodiment of a disclosed method of fabrication;

FIG. 9 presents a cross-sectional view of the partially completed optical apparatus at another stage of fabrication in accordance with one embodiment of the disclosed method;

FIG. 10 presents a cross-sectional view of the partially completed optical apparatus at another stage of fabrication in accordance with one embodiment of the disclosed method;

FIG. 11 presents a cross-sectional view of the partially completed optical apparatus at another stage of fabrication in accordance with one embodiment of the disclosed method;

FIG. 12 presents a cross-sectional view of the partially completed optical apparatus at another stage of fabrication in accordance with one embodiment of the disclosed method;

FIG. 13 presents a cross-sectional view of the partially completed optical apparatus at another stage of fabrication in accordance with one embodiment of the disclosed method; and

FIG. 14 presents a cross-sectional view of the partially completed optical apparatus at another stage of fabrication in accordance with one embodiment of the disclosed method.

In the Figures and text, similar or like reference symbols indicate elements with similar or the same functions and/or structures.

In the Figures, the relative dimensions of some features may be exaggerated to more clearly illustrate one or more of the structures or features therein.

Herein, various embodiments are described more fully by the Figures and the Detailed Description. Nevertheless, the inventions may be embodied in various forms and are not limited to the embodiments described in the Figures and Detailed Description of Illustrative Embodiments.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The description and drawings merely illustrate the principles of the inventions. It will thus be appreciated that those skilled in the art will be able to devise various arrangements that, although not explicitly described or shown herein, embody the principles of the inventions and are included within its scope. Furthermore, all examples recited herein are principally intended expressly to be for pedagogical purposes to aid the reader in understanding the principles of

the inventions and concepts contributed by the inventor(s) to furthering the art, and are to be construed as being without limitation to such specifically recited examples and conditions. Moreover, all statements herein reciting principles, aspects, and embodiments of the inventions, as well as specific examples thereof, are intended to encompass equivalents thereof. Additionally, the term, "or," as used herein, refers to a non-exclusive or, unless otherwise indicated. Also, the various embodiments described herein are not necessarily mutually exclusive, as some embodiments can be combined with one or more other embodiments to form new embodiments.

As part of the present disclosure, we have recognized that the shape of the radiated field distribution of previous vertical optical grating couplers, e.g. configured to have off-normal radiation angles, is often poorly matched to the distribution mode of the single mode fiber, resulting in sub-optimal vertical optical coupling efficiency. In contrast, the shapes of the radiated field distribution of the vertical optical grating couplers of the present disclosure are adjusted to provide off-normal radiation angles that can substantially match a single mode distribution. The vertical optical grating couplers of the present disclosure are optically coupled to two or more waveguide arms, with each arm configured to connect or couple an optical output (e.g., equal portions of a split optical signal) to the optical grating coupler. The optical signal portions, when projected through the grating coupler with off-normal radiation angles, can be combined to produce substantially vertical propagating optical signals whose radiated field distribution has a shape that substantially matches that of the distribution of a propagating mode at the end of a single mode optical fiber.

As further illustrated by the example embodiments below, the resulting combined optical signal can be perpendicularly projected through the grating coupler to an optical fiber, or another optical device, that is substantially perpendicularly oriented relative to the grating coupler to provide for low back reflection. The ability to use a substantially perpendicular orientation simplifies the packaging of the fiber, or other optical device, either above or below the optical grating.

FIGS. 1-3B illustrate radiated field distribution curves for example optical apparatuses 100 of the disclosure that includes dual waveguide arms 105, 107 connected or coupled to direct optical output (e.g., equal portions of an optical signal such as optical signal portions 112, 114) to opposite ends 116, 118 of an optical grating coupler 120, (e.g., a bilaterally symmetric grating).

As illustrated by the radiated field distributions curves (e.g., curves I and II) in FIG. 1, there is an exponentially decreasing strength of the optical radiation for the individual optical signal portions 112, 114 as they travel from the waveguide arms 105, 110 across the grating coupler 120 in their respective opposite directions 122, 124. E.g., the optical power in the signal portions 112, 114, and therefore, the vertically diffracted fields are maximum as the optical signals portions 112, 114 enter the grating coupler 120 and the vertically diffracted field become smaller as the signal portions 112, 114 propagate along the length of the grating coupler 120. However, the two signal portions 112, 114 can combine to produce vertical propagation optical signals having a radiated field distribution curve (e.g., curve I+II) with a substantially constant field strength across the grating coupler 120.

As further illustrated in FIG. 2, the grating coupler 120 can be configured to receive the optical signal portions 112, 114 (e.g., optical outputs from a splitter) and produce

vertically propagating optical signals **210** (e.g., form diffraction patterns), via optical diffraction, in regions above and/or below a major plane **220** of the optical grating coupler **120**. Each of the vertical propagating optical signals **210** (e.g., diffraction patterns), which are made by diffraction of the oppositely propagating light signals **112**, **114**, in the grating coupler **120** has an off-normal radiation angle **230**. E.g., a principal maximum of one of the diffraction patterns overlaps with a principal maximum of another of the diffraction patterns on the optical input-output face of the optical device, the principal maxima of the one and another of the diffraction patterns being directed in different directions.

The term radiation angle **230** of an optical grating, as used herein means, a direction of a first order of principal maximum of the optical grating for optical signals **210** delivered to the grating by a planar optical waveguide in contact with said optical grating. In some embodiments herein, the first order principle maxima of the grating coupler **120** with respect to light delivered by the waveguide arms **105**, **107** are at acute angles relative to a normal to the major plane **220** of the grating coupler **120**. For instance, in some embodiments, the angle **230** has a value in a range from about +1 to +45 degrees and from about -1 to -45 degrees, or in some embodiments, a range from about +2 to +15 degrees and from about -2 to -15 degrees, or in some embodiments, in a range from about +3 to +7 degrees and about -3 to -7 degrees.

As illustrated in FIG. 2, the individual optical signals **210** from the individual features of the grating coupler, can combine via optical interference, to produce a normally propagating light beam having a cosine shaped axial intensity profile (e.g., curve I+II in FIG. 2) across the grating coupler **120**. However as illustrated in FIG. 3A, the grating coupler **120** can be configured to have a characteristic acute off-normal radiation angle **230** so as to produce a combined vertical propagation optical signal **310** with one single cosine shaped field intensity distribution (e.g., curve I+II in FIG. 3A). For instance, the vertically propagated signal **310** can have a single substantially Gaussian shaped field strength distribution (e.g., true Gaussian or near-Gaussian distributions) vertically centered above and below the grating coupler **120** and a direction **312** that is substantially perpendicular to the major plane **220**.

One skilled in the art would understand how the off-normal radiation angle **230** would be selected depending upon the mode size of the optical fiber (or other device) that grating coupler **120** is to be vertically optically coupled to. E.g., the smaller the fiber mode size, the larger the angle **230** needed to reduce the field distribution, and, the larger the fiber mode size the smaller the angle **230** needed to increase the field distribution.

Based on the present disclosure, one of ordinary skill in the pertinent art would understand how to configure the grating coupler **120** with vertically emitted light distribution (e.g., with a desired off-normal radiation angle **230**) by adjusting the period **325** and spacing **330** of a set of equally spaced ridged shaped grating elements **335** of the grating coupler **120**. E.g., for a grating coupler **120** composed of silicon (e.g., refractive index equal to about 3.5 in the common optical telecommunication bands) and surrounded by a silicon dioxide cladding (e.g., refractive index equal to about 1.4), a period **325** of about 0.6 microns and spacing **330** of about 0.28 microns would provide an off-normal radiation angle **230** of about +3 and -3 degrees. E.g., a period **325** of about 0.6 microns and spacing **330** of about 0.24 microns would provide an off-normal radiation angle

**230** of about +5 and -5 degrees, and, the light intensity profile (e.g., a Gaussian-shaped profile) across the end-face of an optical device **340** (e.g., fiber) a few microns above the surface of the coupler **120**.

As further illustrated in FIG. 3A, embodiments of the apparatus **100** can further include an optical device **340** (e.g., an optical fiber) having an optical input-output face **345** (e.g., fiber end) located in a region **347** centered over the optical grating coupler **120**. For instance, the optical device **340** configured as an optical fiber can have an optical core **349** whose face **345** is centered over the optical grating coupler **120**. For instance, the optical device **340**, e.g., configured as a laser, a photodiode, a photo-detector, a fiber array etc., can have a face **345** centered over the optical grating coupler **120**.

The optical device **340** can be configured to receive the vertical propagation optical signal **310** from the optical grating coupler **120**, or, to transmit a single mode optical signal to the region **347**. For some embodiments, the apparatus **100** can be configured such that light can propagate in either vertical direction, e.g., from the optical device **340** to the optical grating coupler **120** or from the optical grating coupler **120** to the optical device **340**.

The optical grating coupler is configured to produce the vertical propagation optical signal with a beam diameter and numerical aperture that maximizes optical coupling efficiency to a single mode size of an optical device, e.g., as indicated by maximum light intensity transferred between the grating coupler **120** and the optical device **340**.

Embodiments of the optical grating coupler **120** can be configured such that waves of the acute off-normal vertically propagated optical signals **210** destructively interfere to form the single mode size propagation optical signal **310** perpendicularly off-set from the center of the grating coupler **120**.

For instance, in some embodiments, when the optical device **340** has a single mode size diameter in a range from 3 to 15 microns and the optical grating coupler **120**, composed of silicon and surrounded by a silicon oxide cladding, with equally spaced ridges elements **335** can have a periodicity (period **325**) in a range from 0.4 to 0.2 microns and a spacing **330** in a range from 0.1 to 1.9 microns.

As also illustrated in FIG. 3A, embodiments of the apparatus **100** can further include a mirror **350** having a reflective surface **355** (e.g., a planar reflective surface of a metal mirror) facing and parallel to the major plane **220** of the optical grating coupler **120**. As illustrated the reflective surface **355** of the mirror **350** can be located in a region **357** centered over the optical grating coupler **120**.

As illustrated in FIG. 3B, in some embodiments the mirror **350** can be located under the optical grating coupler **120** and the reflective surface **355** facing and parallel to the major plane **220** of the optical grating coupler **120** can be located in a region **357** centered under the optical grating coupler **120**. In such embodiments the optical device **340** can be located over the optical grating coupler **120** with the optical input-output face **345** located in a region **347** centered under the optical grating coupler **120**.

FIG. 4 presents an overhead a plan view of another example apparatus **100** embodiment of the disclosure, similar to the apparatus **100** depicted in FIG. 3B. As illustrated the core **349** of the optical fiber device **340** is centered under the optical grating coupler **120**, the coupler **120** is configured as a one-dimensional grating, and, the dual waveguide arms **105**, **107** are connected or optically coupled to the grating coupler **120**.

In some embodiments, more than two waveguide arms can be coupled to the grating coupler **120**, e.g., to provide further control over the shaping of the field distribution of the vertically propagated signal **310**. For example, three or four or more waveguide arms can be connected or coupled to the optical grating coupler with each arm configured to carry an optical output (e.g., equal portions of a split optical signal) to the grating coupler. Similarly in some embodiments, e.g., to provide further shaping of the field distribution of the vertically propagated signal **310**, two or more waveguide arms can be optically coupled to an optical grating coupler that is configured as a two-dimensional grating coupler.

As illustrated in FIG. 4, the two or more waveguide arms **105**, **107** are coupled to a single waveguide **410** on a substrate **420** of the apparatus **100** (e.g., a photonic integrated circuit substrate such as a silicon chip substrate). The single waveguide **410** is configured to carry the split optical signal **430**, that is, the signal that is split into the optical signal portions **112**, **114**. For embodiments where light is propagated from the optical device **340** to the optical grating coupler **120**, the vertically propagated optical signal **310** is split into the optical signal portions **112**, **114** and combined to form the optical signal **430**.

As illustrated in FIG. 4, the apparatus **100** can further include a splitter/combiner device **440** located on the substrate **420** (e.g., an optical diplexer) and configured to optically couple the two or more waveguide arms **105**, **107** with the single waveguide **410**. Non-limiting examples of the splitter/combiner device **440** include mono- or bi-directional Y-splitters or multi-mode interference (MMI) couplers.

As illustrated in FIG. 4, in some embodiments, to facilitate optical coupling efficiency, for some embodiments, ends **116**, **118** of the two or more waveguide arms **105**, **107** can be tapered from a width **450** about equal to a width **452** of the optical grating coupler **120** (e.g., a width **452** of about 10 to 12 microns in some embodiments of a single mode fiber) to a width **454** of the non-taper portions of the waveguide arms **105**, **107** (e.g., a width **454** of about 0.4 to 0.6 microns in some embodiments).

As illustrated in FIG. 4, some embodiments of the apparatus **100** further include an optical phase shifter **460** optically coupled to one of the waveguide arms (e.g., arm **105**). The optical phase shifter **460** (e.g., a thermo-optic, liquid crystal, electro-optic effects, magneto-optic phase shifter) can be configured to adjust a phase of the portion of the split optical signal (e.g., signal **112**) directed through the one waveguide arm **105**, e.g., to facilitate optical coupling efficiency of light propagated from the grating coupler **120** to the optical device **340**.

In some embodiments, when coupling light from the grating coupler **120** to an optical device **340** the phase shifter **460** can also be used to adjust or tune the position of the peak intensity distribution of the vertical propagation optical signal **310**, e.g., with the single substantially Gaussian shaped field strength distribution, in a plane parallel to but off-set from the major plane **220**. For instance, the optical phase shifter **460** can be configured to adjust the phase of the portion of the split optical signal such that the optical signal portions **112**, **114** directed to the optical grating coupler **120** combine to produce the vertical propagation optical signal **310** with a single substantially Gaussian shaped field strength distribution having a peak intensity in a plane parallel to but perpendicularly off-set from the major plane **220**.

For some embodiments of the apparatus **100** configured such that light can propagate from the optical device **340** to the optical grating coupler **120** and on to the waveguide arms **105**, **107** the waveguide arms do not need to be coupled to a single waveguide arm, and the light couple to each waveguide arm can be used for different purposes or further manipulated in different ways. For instance, one waveguide arm can be coupled to a local oscillator to change the polarization of the light to one or S or P polarized light while the other waveguide arm carries the other of P or S polarized light.

As further illustrated, the optical apparatus **100** can be part of an optical system package **470**, where the substrate **420** of the apparatus **100** is mounted to an optical system package support substrate **475** of the package **470**. In some embodiments, a phase control module **480** is located on the package substrate **475** and the phase control module **480** is coupled via electrodes **485** on the substrate **420** to the optical phase shifter **460**. One skilled in the pertinent art would understand how the phase control module **480** could be configured to adjust the phase shifter **460** so as to optimize optical coupling efficiency.

In some embodiments, the splitter/combiner **440** can be configured as a 2x2 splitter/combiner **440** (e.g., a 2x2 MMI coupler) and optical output **488** from a port of the 2x2 splitter/combiner **440** can be monitored, e.g., via an optical sensor **490** to produce a monitor signal **492** that is transmitted (e.g., via electrical line **495**) to the phase control module **480** to facilitate the phase control module **480** to control the phase shifter **460**, e.g., as part of optimizing optical coupling efficiency.

FIGS. 5A and 5B present cross-sectional views of additional optical apparatus **100** embodiments of the disclosure, similar to the apparatuses depicted in FIGS. 3A, 3B and 4.

As illustrated in FIG. 5A, the two or more waveguide arms **105**, **107** and the optical grating coupler **120** are located on a substrate **420** (e.g., photonic integrated circuit chip substrate) and the substrate **420** is mounted to an optical system package support substrate **475** (e.g., a silicon support substrate **475** of an optical system package **470**). The waveguide arms **105**, **107** and the optical grating coupler **120** can be part of a common optical layer **505** located on a cladding layer **510** (e.g., lower cladding layer) which in turn is located on a handle layer **515** of the substrate **420**. For instance, in some embodiments the substrate **420** can be a silicon-on-insulator substrate where the handle layer **515** is a silicon layer, the cladding layer **510** is a silicon oxide layer and the optical layer **505** is an epitaxially grown silicon layer. In other embodiments, the optical layer **505** not necessarily an epitaxially grown silicon layer and may be composed of other optical material familiar to those skilled in the pertinent art.

As further illustrated in FIG. 5A, some apparatus embodiments can further include a second cladding layer **520** (e.g., upper cladding layer) located on the optical layer **505** and lower cladding layer **510**, and, covering the two or more waveguide arms **105**, **107** and the optical grating coupler **120**. For instance, the second cladding layer **520** can be a silicon oxide layer deposited over the optical layer **505**.

As further illustrated in FIG. 5A, in some embodiments, to facilitate a perpendicular mounting orientation, an end portion **525** of the optical device **340** can be mounted to the substrate **420** through an opening **530** formed in the substrate **420**. For instance, the input-output face **345** of the optical device **340** can be located on a planar surface **535** of the lower cladding layer **510** exposed by forming an opening **530** in the handle layer **515**. For instance, in some embodi-

ments, the end portion **525** of the optical device **340** forms a substantially perpendicular angle **540** (e.g., 90 degrees $\pm$ 1 degree) with respect to the major plane **220** of the optical grating coupler **120**.

As further illustrated in FIG. **5A** some apparatus embodiments can further include a mirror **350** located on the opposite side of the optical device **340**, e.g., to enhance optical coupling efficiency between the optical grating coupler **120** the optical device **340**. In some embodiments the mirror **350** can include a metal (e.g., Cu, Al, W), or multilayer dielectric materials, deposited in an opening **545** in the upper cladding layer **520**. In some embodiments, mirror **350** can be embedded inside the upper cladding layer **520** when formed during the cladding deposition.

As illustrated in FIG. **5A** for apparatus embodiments the optical device **340** can be located under the optical grating coupler **120**, e.g., in an opening **530** formed in the substrate **420**, and, the mirror can be embedded in an opening **545** of the upper cladding layer **520**. In other embodiments, such as shown in FIG. **5B**, again to facilitate having a perpendicular mounting orientation with the substantially perpendicular angle **540**, the end portion **525** of the optical device **340** can be mounted to the substrate **420** through an opening **550** formed in the (e.g., silicon) support substrate **475**. For instance, the input-output face **345** of the optical device **340** can be located on a planar surface **555** of the upper cladding layer **520** exposed by forming the opening **550**. Such an embodiment can include a mirror **350** located on the opposite side of the optical device **340**, e.g., located in an opening **530** of the substrate **420**, with the mirror material deposited on a planar surface **535** of the lower cladding layer **510**.

Embodiments of the apparatus **100** could be configured couple light at a wavelength in any of the common optical telecommunication bands, including the Original (e.g., about 1260 to about 1360 nm), Extended (e.g., about 1360 to about 1460 nm), Short (e.g., about 1460 to about 1530 nm), Conventional (C-band, e.g., about 1530 to about 1565 nm), Long (from e.g., 1565 to about 1625 nm) or Ultralong (e.g., about 1625 to about 1675 nm) bands.

FIG. **6** presents exemplary field distribution contours for a simulated apparatus embodiment of the disclosure, similar to the apparatuses shown in FIG. **3B** or **5A**. The field distribution contours were simulated using a computer program (e.g., CST Microwave Studio based on the Finite Integration Technique). The simulation assumed a silicon optical grating coupler **120** of the disclosure having a width **605** of 12 microns surrounded by silicon oxide cladding layers **510**, **520** of thickness **610**, **612** equal to 4.5 an 1.5 microns, respectively. The optical device **340** was assumed to be an optical fiber having a core **349** diameter **615** of about 9 microns, and a totally reflective mirror **350** was assumed to be located on the opposite side of the optical device on, e.g., the upper cladding layer **520**. The optical grating coupler was assumed to be a 1 dimensional grating having a period (e.g., period **325** in FIG. **3A**) of 0.574 microns and spacing (e.g., spacing **330** in FIG. **3A**) of 0.227 microns. For the simulation, the optical device **340** was assumed to propagate single mode light **310** of frequencies in the range from 190.4 THz to 192.4 THz to the optical grating coupler **120**. As illustrated the light **320** to the grating coupler **120** are equally coupled, as signified by the scattering parameters **S1**, **S2**, to the waveguide arms **105**, **107**.

FIG. **7** presents exemplary optical coupling efficiency as a function of optical frequency for the simulated apparatus embodiment shown in FIG. **6**. The vertical axis in FIG. **7** is the sum of the scattering parameters (**S1+S2**) which is

equivalent to the total optical coupling efficiency of light coupled between to optical device **340** to a single waveguide (e.g., waveguide **410** in FIG. **4**) that the waveguide arms **105**, **107** are coupled to. As illustrated, about 93 percent coupling efficiency is possible over the frequency range about 190.4 to 191 THz (e.g., about 1574 to 1570 nm).

Another embodiment of the disclosure is a method that includes fabricating a vertical optical coupling apparatus such as any of the example apparatuses **100** described in the context of FIGS. **1-7**. FIGS. **8-14** present cross-sectional views of the optical apparatus **100** at different stages of fabrication in accordance with embodiments of the disclosed method.

As illustrated in FIG. **8**, fabricating the apparatus **100** can include providing a substrate **420** and providing an optical layer **505** on the substrate **420**. For instance as illustrated the substrate **420** (e.g., a silicon-on-insulator substrate) can include a handle layer **515** (e.g., a bulk silicon layer) and a first cladding layer **510** (e.g., a buried silicon oxide layer) on the handle layer **515** with the optical layer **510** (e.g., an optical silicon layer) located on the first cladding layer **510**. E.g., in some embodiments, has a silicon optical layer **220** and buried oxide layer **230** located on a bulk silicon layer **240**, e.g., as illustrated in FIGS. **2A-2B**). In other embodiments, optical layer **510** can be provide as part providing a silicon-on-insulator substrate, while in other embodiments, the optical layer can be deposited on the substrate using procedure familiar to those in the pertinent art.

As illustrated in FIG. **9**, fabricating the apparatus **100** can include patterning the optical layer **505** to form an optical grating coupler **120** and two or more waveguide arms **105**, **107** optically coupled to the optical grating coupler **120**. Patterning can include any conventional lithographic and etching procedures familiar to those skilled in the pertinent art to remove portions of the optical layer **505** laying outside of the optical coupler **120**, waveguide arms **105**, **107** or other optical components of the apparatus **100**.

As disclosed in the context of FIGS. **1-7**, in some embodiments, the optical grating coupler **120** can be connected receive light **112**, **114** from each of the waveguide arms **105**, **107** and form diffraction pattern therefrom such that a principal maximum of one of the diffraction patterns overlaps with a principal maximum of another of the diffraction patterns on the optical input-output face of the optical device, the principal maxima of the one and another of the diffraction patterns being directed in different directions.

As disclosed in the context of FIGS. **1-7**, in some embodiments, the optical grating coupler **120** can be configured to produce a vertical propagation optical signal **310** in a region above and below a major plane **220** of the optical grating coupler **120**. As disclosed in the context of FIGS. **1-7**, the two or more waveguide arms **105**, **107** are each configured to couple equal portions (e.g., light portions **112**, **114**) of a split optical signal **410** with the optical grating coupler **120**, where each of the portions of the split optical signal **112**, **114** when directed to the optical grating coupler **120**, produce vertical propagation optical signals **210** with an acute off-normal radiation angle **230** relative to the major plane **220** of the optical grating coupler **120**.

As illustrated in FIG. **10**, fabricating the apparatus **100** can include depositing a second cladding layer **520** on the optical grating coupler **120** and the two or more waveguide arms **105**, **107**.

As illustrated in FIG. **11**, in some method embodiments, fabricating the apparatus **100** can include forming an opening **545** in the second cladding layer **520** and depositing a reflective material in the opening of the second cladding

layer to form a mirror **350** having a planar reflective surface **355** facing, and parallel to, the major plane **220** of the optical grating coupler **120**. Alternatively, in some embodiments, the mirror **350** can be deposited on outer surface **1105** of the upper cladding layer **520** or can be deposited during the back-end-of-line processes in which case the mirror **350** can be embedded inside the upper cladding **520**.

Conventional lithographic and etching procedures familiar to those skilled in the pertinent art can be used to form the opening **545** and the reflective material can be a metal layer or multi-layered dielectric materials deposited via physical or vapor deposition, electro-deposition, electroless or similar process familiar to one skilled in the pertinent art. In some embodiments, forming the opening and depositing the reflective material can be integrated with conventional fabrication steps to form vias or landing pads, e.g., as part of forming electrical connections to control circuitry of the apparatus.

As illustrated in FIG. **12**, in some such embodiments fabricating the apparatus **100** can also include, e.g., using conventional lithographic and etching procedures, forming an opening **530** in the substrate **420** and positioning an optical input-output **345** of an optical device **340** in the opening **530** of the substrate **420**, where the optical input-output **345** is located in a region (e.g., region **347**, FIG. **3B**) centered under the optical grating coupler **120**, and, the optical device **340** can be configured to receive the vertical propagation optical signal **310** from the optical grating coupler **120**, or, to transmit a single mode optical signal to the region (e.g., region **347**, FIG. **3B**).

As illustrated in FIGS. **12** and **13**, in some method embodiments, fabricating the apparatus **100** can include mounting an optical system package support substrate **475** to the substrate **420**, e.g., as part of fabricating an optical system package **470**.

As illustrated in FIG. **13**, some such embodiments include, e.g., using conventional lithographic and etching procedures, forming an opening **550** in the optical system package support substrate **475** and positioning an optical input-output **345** of an optical device **340** in the opening **550** of the optical system package support substrate **475**. The optical input-output **345** is located in a region (e.g., region **347**, FIG. **3A**) centered over the optical grating coupler **120**, and, the optical device **340** can be configured to receive the vertical propagation optical signal **310** from the optical grating coupler **120**, or, transmit a single mode optical signal to the region (e.g., region **347**, FIG. **3A**).

As illustrated in FIG. **14**, some such embodiments, further include, e.g., using the conventional procedures described in the context of FIG. **12**, form an opening **530** in the substrate **420** and depositing a reflective material in the opening of the substrate to form a mirror **350** having a planar reflective surface **355** facing and parallel to the major plane of the optical grating coupler.

Although the present disclosure has been described in detail, those skilled in the art should understand that they can make various changes, substitutions and alterations herein without departing from the scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. An optical apparatus, comprising:
  - an optical device having an optical input-output face;
    - at least two planar waveguide arms being located on a substrate;
    - an optical splitter being located on the substrate and having an optical input and a plurality of optical

outputs, each optical output being optically connected to a corresponding one of the planar waveguide arms; and

an optical grating coupler being located on the substrate such that the planar waveguide arms transmit light to different end portions of the optical grating coupler such that the optical grating coupler forms diffraction patterns from the light transmitted by different ones of the waveguide arms such that a principal maximum of one of the diffraction patterns overlaps with a principal maximum of another of the diffraction patterns on the optical input-output face of the optical device, the principal maxima of the one and another of the diffraction patterns being directed in different directions.

2. The optical apparatus of claim **1**, wherein a first of the planar waveguide arms is configured to propagate the light along the optical grating coupler in an opposite direction than a second of the planar waveguide arms.

3. The optical apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the overlapping principal maxima are first order principal maxima of the one and another of the diffraction patterns.

4. The optical apparatus of claim **1**, wherein only one principal maximum of the one and another of the diffraction patterns is incident on the optical input-output face of the optical device.

5. The optical apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the overlapping principal maxima has a peak at or near a center of the optical input-output face.

6. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the diffraction patterns combine to form an intensity pattern with one peak on the optical input-output face of the optical device.

7. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the diffraction patterns combine to form an intensity pattern with a single substantially Gaussian shaped field strength distribution centered above and below the optical grating coupler.

8. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the optical device is an optical fiber and the optical input-output face is an end of the fiber.

9. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the diffraction patterns combine to form an intensity pattern with a shape and numerical aperture that maximizes optical coupling efficiency to a single mode size of the optical device.

10. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the optical device has a single mode size diameter in a range from 3 to 15 microns and the optical grating coupler, composed of silicon and surrounded by a silicon oxide cladding, includes a set of equally spaced ridges across one dimension of the substrate, wherein the ridges has a periodicity in a range from 0.4 to 2.0 microns and a spacing in a range from 0.1 to 1.9 microns.

11. The apparatus of claim **1**, further including an optical phase shifter optically coupled to one of the waveguide arms, the optical phase shifter configured to adjust a phase of the portion of the optical output directed through the one waveguide arm.

12. The apparatus of claim **1**, further including an optical phase shifter optically coupled to one of the waveguide arms, the optical phase shifter configured to adjust the phase of the portion of the optical output directed through the one waveguide arm such that the optical output portions directed to the optical grating coupler combine to produce the diffraction patterns with an intensity pattern with a single substantially Gaussian shaped field strength distribution having a peak intensity in a plane parallel to but perpendicularly off-set from a major plane of the optical grating coupler.

13. The apparatus of **1**, further including a phase control module located on the optical system package substrate and

coupled via electrodes on the substrate to an optical phase shifter located on the substrate and optically coupled to one of the waveguide arms.

14. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the substrate is a photonic integrated circuit substrate mounted to an optical system package support substrate.

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